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(please format Last Name, First Name)

ACTION: ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS
COLLECTIVE *IMMEDIATE*

FOR AMBASSADORS AND CONSULAR CHIEFS FROM ACTING
ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOND

REF: 14 STATE 92052

TAGS: CMGT, CVIS, CASC, KCSY, KFRD

SUBJECT: Consular Operations and the Importance of Customer Service

1. (U) Earlier this week, we sent out guidance related to the technical problems occurring with the Bureau of Consular Affairs' (CA) Consular Consolidated Database (CCD). This is an update to that guidance. I know that every post is actively engaged in communicating with the public, and efforts at one post may be slightly different from efforts at another. I appreciate everyone's continued hard work and patience as we continue to work to resolve the problems. This ALDAC contains guidance on communication with applicants.

2. (U) While we have been able to print roughly half of all visas issued since July 20, 2014, a sizeable number of applicants are still waiting for us to return their passports with newly-issued visas. Not knowing the status of their case, whether their passports will be returned in time for their trips to the United States, or whether there is some other reason they are not getting their visas is causing great concern, which we can all understand. Communicating information to applicants is an important aspect of providing the world class customer service they expect from us. I urge consular managers to ensure that information on post websites is being regularly updated.

3. (U) Applicants concerned about the status of their passports may be relieved to know that in many cases, the visas have already been printed and are in the

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possession of GSS vendor couriers. Posts with document delivery services should explain to applicants how to first check with the GSS vendor to see if they have the visa'ed passport , and encourage applicants to check with couriers before contacting the consular section directly.

4. (U) In cases where a visa is not yet able to be printed, I ask every consular manager to be as helpful, proactive, and understanding of our customers as possible. Some applicants will need to retrieve that passport in order to conduct other travel before we are able to issue their visa. Please ensure that contact information for your consular section is prominently and clearly displayed on your post's website for applicants to use in requesting their passports back from the consular section, and be sure your staff is following through with prompt, clear replies. Included below is cleared template language, which every post should post to their websites. It may be tailored to post-specific circumstances.

The U.S. Department of State is currently experiencing technical problems with its visa system, which are affecting global operations. This issue is worldwide and is not specific to any particular country or visa category. We recognize and deeply regret the inconvenience to travelers. We are doing everything possible to return passports with visas as soon as we are able to complete processing. We regret that we are currently unable to predict how long the delay will be.

[For posts with courier passback only: Applicants who are concerned about the status of their passports should check with [contact information for the GSS vendor] to see if the passport has already been received for delivery.]

Applicants who interviewed with the U.S. Embassy/Consulate after July 20 and who would like their passports returned to them without the U.S. visa may contact *[post email address, or GSS vendor where appropriate]* and provide their name, passport number and *[other details as appropriate to your post]*. *[Note: If the volume your post is handling is small enough that applicants may visit an inquiry window instead, please provide specific hours for such services.]*

Applicants who have an urgent need to travel to the United States may contact *[post email address, or GSS vendor where appropriate]* with their name, passport number, and nature of the emergency. Please

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understand that only true emergencies of an extraordinary humanitarian nature can be considered for exceptional handling.

We appreciate your patience as we work to resolve this matter and apologize for the inconvenience.

5. (U) If appropriate for your post, please also link to the visa page of travel.state.gov, which will be updated daily with a public status report. This link can be found at <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english.html>.
6. (U) For media inquiries, posts should draw on cleared press guidance, which can be found at the following link under Daily Press Guidance:
<https://mru2.state.gov/guidanceclip.aspx>
7. (U) We will continue to do everything we can to support your consular sections until the problems are resolved. Consular managers can continue to flag the Visa Office at [CA-Cases-Expedite](#) rare cases of extraordinary national or humanitarian interest, which will work to ensure those individuals are able to travel. Please understand that such alternate arrangements must be rare exceptions.
8. (U) Thank you again for your extraordinary service during this time.
9. (U) Minimize considered.

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